

The Children's Assessment Center

Internship Goals and Philosophy of Training

The mission of The Children's Assessment Center (CAC) pre-doctoral psychology internship program is to assist doctoral candidates in developing proficiency in the provision of a broad range of clinical and scholarly psychology functions, across a variety of settings, and in a manner consistent with APA Ethical Standards. Our ultimate goal is to assist the intern in learning how to act competently, respectfully, ethically, and empathically in the delivery of mental health and psychological services while being ever cognizant of the cultural and individual diversity of the clients being served. This necessarily includes an understanding of multi-cultural and under-served population issues, as well as an awareness of professional issues, standards, and consumer protection ethics.

The CAC utilizes a scientist-practitioner model of training, which emphasizes the integration of scientific inquiry in clinical thinking and decision making with the use of existing research and evidenced based treatments. Interns are exposed to a variety of theoretical approaches including: cognitive-behavioral, psychodynamic, family systems, and humanistic approaches. Training is accomplished through experiential interaction with a diverse client population, psychological assessment, crisis intervention, individual and group supervision, didactic instruction, forensic work, consultation, community training/outreach, research opportunities, and self-study. Therapeutic milieus include individual, family, and group therapy, as well as a myriad of expressive therapies (i.e., play, art, music, and dance/movement therapy). Clinical research is also encouraged and supported by the provision of time for research pursuits and presentations.

An internship at The CAC is a twelve-month, full-time training program for advanced pre-doctoral students in Clinical, Counseling, or School Psychology. All training time credited toward internship is post-clerkship, post-practicum, post-externship, and pre-doctorate. Interns will receive supervised experience in intakes, psychological assessment, diagnosis and treatment planning, case management, and psychotherapy with clients (age toddlers through adults) experiencing a wide variety of disorders. In addition to developing clinical skills, this internship site seeks to assist the intern regarding the development of a professional identity. To that end, interns are encouraged to participate in educational seminars, conferences, and community outreach endeavors.

One of the primary goals of The CAC is to promote the complete healing of child victims of sexual abuse, as well as their families. Once sexual abuse has been substantiated, children needing therapeutic treatment or psychological testing are referred to The CAC's **Therapy and Psychological Services Department**. Comprised of two Ph.D. level psychologists, eight Masters level therapists, and additional contract professionals from both levels, The CAC's Therapy and Psychological Services team is instrumental in caring for the children's emotional needs. The program offers on-site and community-based therapy, psychological assessment, and psychiatric evaluation to child victims and their family members to assist them throughout the healing process. Using a holistic approach, the Therapy and Psychological Services Department works with the entire family, offering various types of therapies conducted by professionals from several disciplines whose interventions are guided by a variety of theoretical orientations to assist sexually abused children, their siblings, and non-offending caregivers.

Fundamentally, The CAC's goal is to always keep the needs of the children and their families as the focus. Because we recognize that different approaches and modalities will be valuable in meeting the various needs of the children, the therapy and psychological services department consistently employs a unique, integrative approach to treatment. While utilizing cognitive-behavioral, psychodynamic, humanistic, and family systems approaches, therapy services also includes an expressive therapies program that includes music, dance/movement, art, drama, and poetry. These treatment modalities are implemented in individual and group settings. The expressive therapies are designed to assist children discovering the connection between their feelings and their physical expressions. This discovery improves children's ability to identify feelings in themselves and others. It also provides children with a new way to express confusing feelings. Dance/movement therapy is particularly helpful when there is conflict or transition in a group, as cooperative dance/movement activities allow children to quickly develop bonds and resolve trust issues. Children learn through active practice to establish and to protect their body boundaries that have been violated and damaged by the sexual abuse. Music therapy groups act as a means of expressing feelings in a non-threatening, non-verbal, creative manner as participants see their self-esteem and self-concept grow. Through integration of traditional therapies and expressive therapies, children served at The CAC experience the integration of the emotional, cognitive, and physical components of themselves, enhance their self-esteem, and increase their enjoyment of life.

When children and parents give permission, individual, group, and expressive therapy sessions are videotaped. This is a useful training tool, both for improving the observation and analysis skills of The CAC's clinicians as well as for teaching expressive arts interventions.

The CAC also offers Spanish/English bilingual clinicians for all types and formats of therapy as well as a clinician fluent in American Sign Language. In addition, when children or their relatives have severe mental or emotional difficulties, a psychiatrist is available for evaluation, case consultation, and on-going medication management. The CAC also serves as a training site for numerous colleges and universities at both undergraduate and graduate levels.

Internship Program Description

The CAC will accept at least two full-time interns for a twelve-month internship, which begins September 1st and ends August 31st. Interns will be required to complete a minimum of 1750 clock hours to be used towards licensure. At least 25 percent of their time will be devoted to direct services. Upon completion of the internship year, interns will be granted a certificate of completion signifying that all requirements have been met.

All services provided by interns are conducted on-site and incorporate collaboration with a multi-disciplinary, on-site team including CPS caseworkers, law enforcement officers, physicians, and volunteers. Interns will be required to complete an average of 2 full psychological evaluations per month, as referrals warrant. Additional direct services will include conducting intakes, individual, family, couples, and group therapy, crisis interventions, forensic work, and consultation. Each intern will have the opportunity to participate in developing their specific goals and level of participation in the above direct services. A minimum of two hours of face-to-face individual supervision will be provided

each week. In addition, one to two hours per week are reserved for supervision specifically related to psychological assessment--its administration, scoring, interpretation, and report writing.

At The CAC, interns work as part of a multi-disciplinary team where they consult with many other professionals including law enforcement, district and county attorneys, Child Protective Services staff, physicians, psychiatrists, and mental health professionals. At least two hours per week are devoted specifically to didactics, which includes discussion of case-related issues with other clinicians and staff. One hour per week is devoted to journal review of relevant research. Opportunities for additional professional interaction are afforded the intern through weekly participation at Ground Rounds through Baylor College of Medicine. In addition, seminars are provided on-site and cover a wide variety of topics related primarily to sexual abuse and the assessment/treatment of children and non-offending caregivers. Examples of these seminars include, Child Centered Play Therapy, Personality Disorders, Suicide Assessment and Intervention, Ethical Considerations, and Relational Development Assessment.

Collaborating Organizations And Their Roles

In keeping with our community-based, multidisciplinary approach, The CAC's services are enhanced by the expertise of the forty-five partner agencies that are committed to making child sexual abuse victims and their families high priorities within their respective systems. Each has signed an Inter-agency Agreement and the Guidelines for Center Operation. The 45 partner agencies include:

- **Child Advocates, Inc.** - Provides court appointed volunteers that regularly visit children in protective custody and advocate on their behalf in criminal and family court cases;
- **Crime Stoppers of Houston, Inc.** - Provides a toll-free hotline where callers can report information leading to the arrest and conviction of perpetrators in child sexual abuse cases;
- **Federal Bureau of Investigation** - Performs investigative interviews with children relating to Internet Child Pornography and Child Sexual Exploitation cases. Evidence collected is used in the prosecution of both local and traveler pedophiles in state and federal cases;
- **Harris County Attorney's Office** - Represents the State of Texas in all matters concerning the care, custody, and welfare of the children and provides legal consultation regarding the management of The CAC program;
- **Harris County Protective Services for Children and Adults (CPS)** - Provides investigating and on-going substitute care caseworkers and refers clients to The CAC;
- **Harris County Public Health and Environmental Services** – Provides information on child fatalities;
- **Harris County District Attorney's Office** - Evaluates cases for prosecution and provides legal consultation for law enforcement personnel;
- **Harris County Sheriff's Department, Houston Police Department, Baytown Police Department, Deer Park Police Department, LaPorte Police Department, and Pasadena Police Department** - Gathers information from investigative interviews of the child, collects evidence for prosecution, and provides protection during the intervention process. HPD handles approximately 60% of cases investigated by CPS sexual abuse teams;
- **Houston Area Women's Center/Children's Court Services** - Provides professional accompaniment to children on criminal court cases and assists the families with Crime Victims Compensation Fund applications;

- **Memorial Hermann Healthcare System** - Contributes to the program through ongoing consultation and support;
- **Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFPS)** - Exercises their statutory responsibilities of protecting children and investigating complaints of child abuse and neglect;

The shared philosophy and resources of these partners have led to the overwhelming success of this unique collaboration. These different entities are constantly working together towards improving and expanding the services to the children and families that seek assistance from The CAC. Through regular multi-disciplinary case review meetings, the professionals involved in each child's treatment continuously monitor the progress of the child and their family. This system has proven to be exceptional in assessing the developing needs of each individual child receiving services at The CAC. The evaluation of the effectiveness of the treatment is also conducted at these meetings.

Internship Training Model

The pre-doctoral training model at The CAC is best defined as being a Scientist-Practitioner Model. The internship year is seen as an opportunity for interns to further their integration of psychological theory and knowledge of research through clinical application. The internship's training model emphasizes six core areas of professional competency: 1) assessment, 2) intervention, 3) application of clinical research to practice, 4) treatment planning and goals, 5) quality of care and 6) the development of a working relationship with a multidisciplinary team.

The training model holds that goals and competencies are individually developed between an intern and their supervisor at the outset of the year. These goals and competencies are further enhanced through didactic training and goal-focused supervision. The overriding objective is to assist the intern in developing clinical skills and analytical thinking that will aid the intern in progressing from a student, to a capable, autonomously functioning clinician. Upon completion of the internship, the intern should be able to critically evaluate and apply relevant theoretical and empirical literature to various clinical populations.

The CAC's training program provides the intern with the opportunity to integrate diagnosis and application of community and therapeutic interventions, with a focus on acknowledging and incorporating clients' individual differences and specific needs. The intern will participate in didactic training, which is designed to present them with essential clinical information to build on their previous experience and knowledge. Interns have the opportunity to apply diverse theoretical approaches to treatment within individual, family, and group therapy settings. Additionally, interns enhance their critical assessment skills by conducting psychological evaluations to address a variety of referral questions.

Intern Competencies

The goals of the internship are accomplished through the development of the intern's knowledge, skills, and abilities in the following areas: 1) Exposure to a variety of clinical interventions including individual, family, couples, and group therapy. 2) Increased familiarity with several theoretical orientations and the ability to apply this knowledge to clinical situations. 3) The ability to develop and utilize appropriate treatment goals and plans. 4) Enhancement of interpersonal and public speaking abilities. 5) Development of a professional identity. 6) The ability to work effectively with a multi-disciplinary team and to effectively utilize community resources. 7) A firm understanding of ethical and legal issues. 8) Development of a respectful and sensitive understanding of diverse populations, cultures, and individual differences. 9) Exposure to forensic work. 10) The development of assessment competencies. 11) Supervision of doctoral level psychology practicum students.

These many goals are achievable due to multi-disciplinary interaction and the integrative approach utilized by The CAC.

Training Milieus

The client population at The CAC is composed of diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, ethnic groups, age ranges, and diagnoses. Clients include children (birth to age 17) and adults. Because The CAC utilizes an integrative approach to treatment, a variety of training milieus are offered. In addition to individual therapy we offer:

Intake Evaluations and Psychotherapy

Interns are exposed to a variety of modalities including individual, family, and couples psychotherapy. As part of the individualized treatment plan that is developed for each client, interns will be required to conduct intake evaluations that include diagnostic impressions and to formulate treatment plans.

Group Psychotherapy

The CAC offers a multitude of groups including process/ psychoeducational groups and expressive therapies groups. On average, there are at least 30 groups offered per week. These include groups for victims of sexual abuse, groups for non-offending caregivers, and sibling groups. In addition, adolescent and adult offender groups are offered, as referrals warrant.

Psychological Evaluations

Interns are required to complete an average of 2 full batteries per month throughout the training year. Interns will gain competence in the evaluation of children and adults. Additionally, interns will become proficient in diagnostic skills, writing evaluations, and making pertinent recommendations. Clients are referred for assessment due to a myriad of presenting problems, including concerns about intellectual functioning, concerns about characterological pathology, and concerns related to behavioral symptomatology. The CAC uses a wide variety of assessment instruments including intellectual, achievement, objective, and projective measures. Interns are encouraged to enhance their knowledge of the many instruments available to them. A Ph.D. psychologist provides supervision directly related to psychological evaluations for one to two hours each week.

Consultation/Education

As the primary clinician for a client, interns regularly consult with schools, teachers, Child Protective Services (CPS) staff, medical personnel, attorneys, and other mental health staff regarding that client.

Through consultation, the intern is able to discuss the clinical progress of the client and is often able to gain more information to make appropriate decisions related to treatment. Interns participate in case-conferences, multidisciplinary staffings, and Permanency Planning Team meetings in relation to CPS cases. Interns may provide consultative feedback about testing cases to the family and other agencies. At times, interns are also asked to consult with the courts regarding therapy and testing cases. Interns are encouraged to take part in educational and research projects based on the intern's interests and in negotiation with supervisors. There are frequent opportunities to make presentations in the community regarding various issues related to sexual abuse.

Didactics

Interns participate in weekly case conferences with other staff members. Two hours a week is devoted to discussing case concerns and case-related issues. As part of our on-going interest in research, all Therapy and Psychological Services staff is assigned a journal to read and review for our weekly journal hour. This schedule rotates and allows us to keep abreast of recent research in the area of children and sexual abuse. On site seminars are offered and can be utilized to attain CEU credits, if needed. Some examples of seminars at The CAC include topics such as: Understanding Victims, Understanding Non-Offending Caregivers, Understanding Sex Offenders, Personality Disorders, Cultural Diversity, Working with Difficult Families, Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse, Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy, Play Therapy, Professionals Testifying in Court, and Ethical and Legal Principles.

Clinical Supervision Provided by Interns

Depending upon the number of practicum students at The CAC and their specific program requirements, interns will be afforded the opportunity to supervise doctoral level psychology practicum students currently working at The CAC. This will entail supervision of all practicum student duties including therapy, assessment, research, and crisis intervention. Interns may provide two hours of face-to-face supervision per week for practicum students.

Clinical Supervision for Interns

Supervision is a major emphasis of the internship program at The CAC. Supervision is a primary form of training and evaluation for the development of skill proficiency. Supervision is intended to provide both depth and breadth in clinical application, research, and assessment. To enhance the supervision process, interns may be asked to videotape sessions with clients. This can be a helpful tool for assessing the client and discussing methods of treatment. All supervision is provided face-to-face and consists of a minimum of two hours of individual supervision, one hour of group supervision, and one to two hours of testing supervision by licensed, clinical psychologists. In keeping with our integrated approach, interdisciplinary consultation is utilized with LMSW-ACPs, LMFTs, and LPCs providing supervision as appropriate.

Full-time licensed Psychologists on staff provide primary supervision for interns.

Danielle Madera, Ph.D., Staff Psychologist at The CAC, received her doctoral degree in School Psychology from The University of Florida in 2007. Dr. Madera is a Licensed Psychologist in the state of Texas. She provides psychological evaluations, individual therapy, group therapy, family therapy, and play therapy for child abuse survivors and their families. Dr. Madera also works in the Forensic Services Division of The CAC conducting Extended Forensic Evaluations and provides court testimony related to both her clinical and forensic responsibilities. Dr. Madera's research and clinical interests

revolve around child maltreatment, and she has experience in case management and forensic interviewing with the Department of Children and Families and the Child Protection Team in Gainesville, Florida.

Lawrence Thompson, Jr., Ph.D., Director of Therapy & Psychological Services at The CAC, received his doctoral degree in Clinical Psychology from The University of Michigan in 2000. Dr. Thompson is a Licensed Psychologist in the state of Texas. Dr. Thompson oversees the provision of mental health services at The CAC. This oversight includes the supervision of clinical staff and clinicians in training, consultation with CAC partner agencies, and various administrative responsibilities. Dr. Thompson also provides some direct psychological services, including psychotherapy and crisis intervention. His most pronounced expertise is in the area of trauma and personality disorders. Dr. Thompson also serves as an expert witness in court proceedings and regularly presents on the topics of trauma, psychotherapy and mental health.

Carlo A. Villarreal, Ph.D., Bilingual Staff Psychologist at The CAC, received his doctoral degree in School Psychology from Texas A & M University in 2005. Dr. Villarreal is a Licensed Psychologist in the state of Texas. In 2004, Dr. Villarreal completed an internship in Clinical Child and Pediatric Psychology at Children's Hospital Los Angeles where he was trained in trauma-focused therapy and assessment. Dr. Villarreal is also trained in bilingual assessment and is responsible for conducting psychological evaluations in both English and Spanish. As a member of the Bilingual Clinical Team, Dr. Villarreal provides individual, group, and family therapy to the Spanish-speaking population served at The CAC.

Professional/Supervisory Staff

Additional Clinical Supervisors include:

Susan A. Szczygielski, LCSW, Assistant Director of Therapy & Psychological Services at The CAC, graduated from the University of Houston Graduate School of Social Work in 1993. She became a licensed master social worker in 1993, and a licensed clinical social worker in 1996. She began as an intern at The CAC in 1992 while completing her graduate degree. In 1993, Ms. Szczygielski began employment with The CAC as a therapist, in August 2000 she became Supervisor of Therapy Services; and in July 2004 she was promoted to her current position. She is experienced in providing EMDR, play therapy, and other types of therapy. Her work includes overseeing therapy services, providing individual, group and family therapy services, court testimony, community training, case consultation and crisis services. She also provides clinical supervision to The CAC's employees and to interns from various educational institutions.

Mary Ellen Sherrill, LCSW, Supervisor of Therapy & Psychological Services at The CAC, received her Masters of Social Work at The University Of Georgia in 1989 and her Bachelors of Social Work in 1983. She is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in the state of Texas and has worked as a psychotherapist at The CAC since February of 2000, providing individual and family therapy to sexually abused children and their families. Ms. Sherrill is an Approved Supervisor with the Texas State Board of Social Work Examiners and the Texas State Board of Marriage and Family Therapists; and is also a Field Instructor for the University of Houston Graduate School of Social Work. Her supervisory

responsibilities include both clinical and administrative supervision of full and part-time therapists, and field instruction of graduate students. She also provides crisis intervention, case consultation, court testimony and community training. Her particular areas of interest include the short and long-term neuropsychological effects of severe trauma on children and the use of Child Centered Play Therapy, Psychodynamic Psychotherapy and Animal Assisted Therapy in her work.

Alberta Torres, LCSW, Bilingual Supervisor of Therapy & Psychological Services at The CAC, received her Masters Degree in Social Work in 1992. She holds an undergraduate degree in psychology from the University of Houston. Alberta is licensed as both a Licensed Master Social Worker and as an Advanced Clinical Practitioner in the state of Texas. Alberta is an Approved Supervisor for ACP and LPC candidates. Alberta has trained and worked in the area of sexual abuse for a total of five years. Alberta has been working for The CAC since 1998. In addition, her bilingual/bicultural skills have equipped her to work effectively with Hispanic clients/families and the Hispanic community. Her work at the center includes individual, group and family therapy as well as supervision of interns and candidates for LPC and ACP, court testimony, community training, case consultation and crisis services.

Additional Professional Staff

In addition to the supervisors noted above, there are a number of Masters level and Doctoral level staff and contract staff who provide psychological services to the clients at The CAC.

Evaluation of Intern Performance

Interns will be evaluated at mid-year and at the conclusion of their internship by their supervisors. The site has devised an evaluation form that will be completed with the intern and reviewed in terms of competencies. This form contains objectives and competencies and is scored on a Likert rating scale. At the beginning of the training year, interns will be asked to evaluate their current level of clinical skills on a variety of dimensions utilizing this form. This self-rating process will be utilized to establish a baseline and to assist the intern in developing professional goals to address during the internship year. Each supervision process is based on the individual needs of the intern and goals are developed with this in mind.

Evaluation of Supervision

Interns will also be given the opportunity to evaluate their supervision. This will occur at mid-year and at the conclusion of their internship. This is designed to ensure a process of mutual interaction between the intern and the supervisor(s).

Grievance Policy

Interns are formally hired as employees of Harris County Texas. As such, they are subject to the standard rules and regulations of Harris County, including its Grievance Procedures. A full grievance, due process, and appeals policy is outlined in the Grievance Procedure Packet for Employees of Harris County, and this document is made available to every intern upon entry into the internship program. Copies are available prior to acceptance, if requested.

Stipend and Benefits

Compensation for the one year, full-time internship is \$20,500.00 plus benefits. Benefits include vacation time (based on accrued comp time), sick leave, one "flex" day each week, medical insurance, flexibility to participate in professional enhancement endeavors, and research support in the form of 4 hours a week reserved for dissertation or other research work. Interns also are invited to participate in various CAC social activities including The Spirit of Spring Fashion Show, Golf Tournament, and the Children's Holiday Program.

History and Mission of The Children's Assessment Center

The CAC is a non-profit enterprise founded in 1991 in Houston, Texas, to serve the needs of sexually abused children across Harris County, the largest metropolitan area in the state. It is a collaborative public/private partnership bringing together social workers, physicians, attorneys, and law enforcement professionals in one central location to provide a continuum of critical, coordinated services. Each year, The CAC and its 16 partner agencies serve thousands of Harris County children through a variety of programs. ***The CAC's mission is to provide a professional, compassionate and coordinated approach to the treatment of sexually abused children and their families and to serve as an advocate for all children in our community.***

In the late 1980's a group of social workers, physicians, attorneys, and law enforcement officers joined together to address the issue of child sexual abuse. Each of these professionals recognized that sexual abuse victims were being further traumatized by the systems in place to help them. At that time, when children made an outcry, they were subjected to repetitive interviews with caseworkers, police officers and attorneys in various locations all over Harris County. They were taken to a county hospital or Emergency room for sexual assault examinations and forced to wait in an often times unfriendly environment for hours among critically injured and impatient adults. Physicians conducting the examination were most often general practitioners, who were not specifically trained to conduct sexual assault examinations and preserve physical evidence for prosecution. Under this chaotic system, investigations were poorly conducted, children did not receive appropriate care, and prosecution of offenders was extremely difficult.

Today, The CAC is housed in a 56,000 square foot, child-friendly facility where sexually abused children can feel safe and secure and receive the services they need to heal. Using a multi-disciplinary and coordinated approach in handling sexual abuse cases, The Children's Assessment Center co-houses law enforcement, district and county attorneys, Children's Protective Services, medical professionals, and mental health professionals who collaborate on every aspect of the investigation, treatment, and prosecution of sexual abuse. Ultimately, the goal of The CAC is to promote the complete healing of child victims of sexual abuse and their families by providing them with the necessary resources to effectively cope with their trauma and lead normal and productive lives. The CAC is able to accomplish this goal by providing: 1) a videotaped forensic interview of a child's statement reducing the need for multiple interviews by the various entities involved in a child sexual abuse case, 2) a sexual assault examination using video and digital colposcopy, which is non-invasive and conducted by trained pediatricians and a nurse practitioner, 3) ongoing basic healthcare services, 4) therapy and psychological services to help child sexual abuse victims and their families heal, 5) expert testimony in civil and criminal court cases, and 6) advocacy for children as the children and families make their way through the various systems they will encounter.

Other Programs of The Children's Assessment Center

The CAC provides many of the services listed above through four other distinctive departments in addition to the Therapy and Psychological Services Department. These are: **Forensic Services, Medical Services, Children's Services, and Community Outreach.**

In the **Forensic Services Department**, Forensic Interviewers, who are specifically trained in working with sexually abused children and skilled in obtaining information necessary for law enforcement and prosecution, interview children on videotape. The videotaped interviews allow The CAC staff, law enforcement personnel, the District Attorney's office, and other partner staff to view a child's disclosure and initial reactions without having to further traumatize him or her with repetitive interviews. Additionally, The CAC recognized that many sexually abused children were not receiving services because CPS is mandated by law to provide case management and on-going services only to children who have been abused in their home, or by someone living with them. Thus, in order to extend our services to all children who have been impacted by this crime in Harris County, we have expanded the Assessment Services Department to include Clinical Social Workers for children who have been molested by a non-relative. One social worker serves as the Criminal Case Liaison between The CAC's staff, District Attorney's office and partner agency representatives. The other is the Emergency Funds Manager providing a contact person and resources for clients in need of basic life provisions.

If a child requires a sexual assault examination and assessment they are referred to our on-site **Medical Services Department**. The CAC's sexual abuse examinations are conducted by using video and digital colposcopy, a non-invasive and technologically advanced procedure. The medical clinic also makes available basic, preventive healthcare services to ensure the complete recovery of child victims of sexual abuse.

The **Children's Services Department** ensures that The CAC offers more than medical and mental health treatment of child sexual abuse. The specially trained volunteer caregivers in The CAC's Playroom exemplify this program's goal to provide the children with a caring and child-friendly atmosphere. This program also allows us to provide the children with outlets to entertain or learn more about themselves. The children are treated to various activities throughout the year, including the opportunity to attend a week of the YMCA's Camp Cullen in Trinity, Texas. Additionally, they receive necessary resources, such as food, clothing, toys, and toiletries.

Finally, The CAC strives to increase public awareness of child sexual abuse through our **Community Outreach Department**. The CAC staff and volunteers are frequently invited to make presentations to schools, civic organizations, religious centers, and other social service agencies to help professionals and parents learn about issues related to child sexual abuse.

The Need for the Mental Health Services of The Children's Assessment Center

The National Children's Alliance recently provided very frightening information to The CAC. Children who are exposed to violent behavior—either as victims or witnesses—suffer greater rates of depression, anxiety, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, alcohol and drug abuse, or have significantly lower academic achievement. Children who are abused or neglected are:

- 50% more likely to be arrested while a juvenile
- Nearly 40% more likely to be arrested for a violent crime as an adult
- 33% more likely to abuse drugs
- 77% more likely to be arrested if a female

These children are at great risk for severe emotional and physical difficulties if they are not offered the best mental health and medical services. The degree of trauma experienced by a child who has been sexually abused depends upon several factors: the type, duration, and extent of abuse; the identity of the perpetrator; the age at which the child was abused; the first reactions of significant others to the victim's disclosure; the point at which the abuse was disclosed; and the personality structure of the victim. Studies indicate that the trauma is intensified when an individual with whom a child has a close relationship sexually abuses the child for a period of time, rather than a one-time incident or series of incidents.

Often times, the result of the partner agencies' investigations of child sexual abuse is the incarceration of the perpetrator (statistically, usually a primary caregiver). According to the National Institute of Corrections, parental arrest and confinement lead to stress, trauma, stigmatization, and separation problems for these children. These problems are often coupled with pre-existing problems to the incarceration of a primary caregiver that include poverty, violence, parental substance abuse, high crime environments, intrafamily abuse, abuse and neglect, multiple caregivers, and/or prior separations. As a result, these children often exhibit a broad range of behavioral, emotional, health, and educational problems that are compounded by the pain of separation from a caregiver. According to the FY2001 Department of Justice appropriations bill, "...children of prisoners are six times more likely than other children to be incarcerated at some point in their lives..." The mental health professionals at The CAC must help children cope not only with their sexual abuse, but also with the resulting imprisonment of a loved one and its emotional, social, and financial affect on the family.

Each year, The CAC serves thousands of children from birth through age 17 and their family members. Specifically, The CAC provides services to all residents of Harris County, who represent a broad spectrum of ethnicities, religious backgrounds, and income levels. In addition, The CAC frequently receives referrals from surrounding counties, including Brazoria, Montgomery, and Waller.

In every sector of society, individual ideas, dreams, and determination fuel the collective imagination and ignite progress. Statistics chronicle the problems engulfing America's children and underscore the urgency of the need for help. Failure to provide solutions will only allow the gap to continue, fostering high at-risk situations for children and perpetuating community deterioration. Unless these young victims of sexual abuse receive the proper intervention and treatment, they are at risk of severe psychological problems, including aggressive behaviors, sexual acting out, and a diminished capacity for showing affection or empathy towards others. Abused children often perform poorly in school, abuse alcohol, or exhibit more signs of depression and suicidal intentions than other children. Additionally, there is some indication that abused children are at increased risk to continue the cycle by becoming perpetrators.

How Success is Defined and Measured

The overall success of The CAC program is defined by the abilities of The CAC's staff to provide comprehensive and coordinated services to young victims of child sexual abuse. The measurement of The CAC's success is directly related to the continued partnerships of all of the agencies involved with the assessment, investigation, prosecution, and treatment of these child sexual abuse cases. Our daily activities must be in compliance with the mandates of the Texas Family Code. The CAC also meets the stringent guidelines of the Children's Advocacy Centers of Texas and the National Children's Alliance in order to maintain its membership in both. The CAC's Therapy and Psychological Services team is dedicated to measuring the program's effectiveness, and routinely evaluates all of the program services through client input documented in a client satisfaction survey and a case tracking system database that records each service provided to children and their family. These methods are extremely beneficial to the mental health team, because the therapists and psychologists rely on both short-term and long-term data to measure the effectiveness of the treatment protocol.

Values of The Children's Assessment Center

In Our Work with Our Clients and Others

We believe that in our relationship with our clients and the people we come into contact with we must commit our professional and personal best to all the children of our community. For the child who has been sexually abused, we charge ourselves to help them heal. For all our children, we charge ourselves to help them be healthy in every respect. To these two tasks we will bring professionalism fortified by compassion, understanding and personal involvement. We will remain child-centered and treat all children with dignity and respect. We will work to earn and keep the trust of every child who comes into our care, respecting and protecting their privacy. We ourselves will be diverse so that we can serve a diverse community with equality.

Our purpose and passion will become the property of the children we serve and the children we never see. We will help children learn how to heal and we will learn from them how better to help others heal. We will be their advocates and we will measure our success by the results we achieve more than the energy we exert. We will be holistic in our care and treat each child within the larger context of our respect for the idea of family. We will work with timeliness and efficiency, but never at any cost to our honesty, integrity, intensity, dedication or passion for service to the child. In working with children and others we shall always be mindful of the ancient injunction, "Justice, justice shalt thou pursue."

In Our Work with Each Other and Our Partners

We believe that in our relationships among ourselves and with our partners the key to success is a commitment to collaboration. We will not be afraid to innovate, and we will encourage others to do likewise and we will reinforce those efforts separate from whatever success they might enjoy. We will seek diversity among those with whom we work, both directly and in partnerships. We will constantly support each other and our partners in the need for continuous improvement through growth in our knowledge and ability to serve and by taking the risks through which we learn from both our failure and success. We will treat each other and our partners with dignity and respect. We will strive for excellence in our own work and encourage and recognize excellence in the work of others. We will remember in the day-to-day task of working with others that the goal is results for children.

We will work with each other as staff with the constant understanding that financial *resources* are precious and that we are all stewards of the funds with which we have been entrusted. We will likewise work with our partners to help them assure their financial viability so that our partnerships can be sustained for the long term.

We will bring the same dedication and passion to the success of our partnerships that we bring to our own work. We will deal with each other and our partners honestly and with integrity. We will prize efficiency but we will also remember the need to collaborate, consult and build consensus.

We will encourage and support cutting edge leadership and research on the part of our partners, as well as ourselves. We will encourage our partners' involvement with the community on behalf of all children, including the education of the community on the work that needs to be done. We will encourage our partners' investment in training as a key using all their resources to greatest effect. And we will support our partners in their efforts to grow in service to our children.

In Our Work with Our Community

We believe that in our relationship with our community we must demonstrate leadership in providing a compassionate and coordinated approach to the treatment of sexually abused children by honoring the principles of volunteerism, partnership and innovative collaboration and by increasing community involvement and understanding through education, research and training. We will build confidence in our ability to maintain our effort for the long term by being good financial stewards of the resources entrusted to us. We will avoid complacency by constant learning. We will strive to reach the sexually abused child in every part of our community by embracing diversity. We will earn and keep the trust of the community by consenting to be judged not only by the passion of our dedication to our mission, but also by the quantity and quality of our results.

Application Process

An application packet must include the following materials:

- Completed APPIC application
- Curriculum Vitae or Resume
- Official graduate school transcript
- Two letters of reference
- One letter of reference from Director of Clinical Training
- Two full battery assessment reports
- Brief statement addressing your interest in The CAC's Internship in Psychology. Please indicate interests in particular experiences available to you through The CAC and reasons you expect you would be a good fit with the training opportunities available here. Include any additional information you would like us to consider.
- Completion of the "Checklist of Required Application and Supporting Materials" cover page

Application packets must be complete and received by November 15 to be considered for review.

All interns are required to pass a background check and drug screening prior to final acceptance into The CAC Internship program.

Send application and all supporting materials no later than November 15 to:

Lawrence Thompson Jr., Ph.D.
Director of Therapy and Psychological Services
2500 Bolsover Street
Houston, Texas 77005
713-986-3458
713-986-3554 (fax)